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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, SECOM

FROM:

[REDACTED]
SECOM Member

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SUBJECT: Unauthorized Disclosures of Classified
Information in Unclassified Symposia [REDACTED]

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REFERENCE: SECOM-M-285, dated 22 February 1985, Same
Subject

1. This memorandum is in response to Chairman, SECOM's request for guidance on the problem of unauthorized disclosures of classified information in unclassified symposia. (FOUO)

2. This Office's records show that the issue of unauthorized disclosures at unclassified symposia merits community concern. Examples of the problem have appeared recently in the media. Such unauthorized disclosures undermine the security discipline instilled in cleared personnel who must regularly interface with uncleared individuals in various professional, political, academic and social environments.

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3. To effectively address this problem, attention should be given to:

The process by which outside activities are approved. The approval process should not be a "rubber stamp" transaction. Personnel submitting requests should be sensitized to the possible security problem before attending such symposia. Cognizant security officers should be encouraged to develop exacting request/approval procedures if they are not already in place. They should follow up with attendees of symposia to determine what, if anything, happened of Security significance.

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The Intelligence Community and contractor training on the subject of unauthorized disclosures. This training should include more emphasis on techniques used by various professionals, such as journalists and academicians, to elicit classified information. Unclassified case histories should be used to convince cleared professionals that the problem does exist. Cleared personnel should be encouraged to assist in defining the extent of the problem. All participants must be reminded that a prior unauthorized disclosure in the media does not declassify a subject.

The way data concerning such leaks of classified information is collected and maintained by various agencies. In order to better assess the phenomena of unauthorized disclosures of classified information at unclassified symposia, data collection needs to be systematic. Such data may be collected by various components within an agency but not compiled in one place for the express purpose of defining the nature and scope of the problem. The SECOM Leak Data Base is a step in the right direction for the Community. It will provide more specific data regarding unauthorized disclosures generally, as well as those unauthorized disclosures that occur at unclassified symposia.

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4. The emphasis must be on security education and awareness for cleared government personnel and for contractor personnel. This Agency recently forwarded a cable to contractor personnel to remind them of their obligation, when attending such seminars, to maintain the security of classified and sensitive project information. Of course, when individuals who have made unauthorized disclosures of classified information have been identified, appropriate administrative sanctions and legal action should be undertaken.

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